

NEWS RELEASE

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Chicago Man Pleads Guilty to Passing Counterfeit Currency

Rock Island, IL - Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced today that Melvin H. Burney, a Chicago resident, pled guilty this afternoon to a federal indictment charging him with knowingly using counterfeit United States currency to purchase items at a Wal-Mart store in Princeton, Illinois, and the conspiracy to do so.

During a court appearance today before U.S. District Judge Michael M. Mihm in Peoria, Burney admitted that on October 15, 2005, he and others entered the Wal-Mart store in Princeton and purchased items at the store using counterfeit currency. Specifically, Burney admitted that he used actual five dollar bills that were bleached and then had images of \$100 and \$50 bills printed onto them. Wal-Mart management personnel were quickly alerted by cashiers at the store that they believed Burney and certain other individuals were using money that was counterfeit. Shortly thereafter, Burney was arrested by officers of the Princeton Police Department. During his guilty plea hearing, Burney admitted that at the time of his arrest, he also had a counterfeit \$100 bill in his possession. As alleged in the indictment, Burney had also previously attempted to pass counterfeit currency at two stores in the Chicago area in September and October of this year.

The charges are the result of an investigation by the United States Secret Service and the Princeton Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew J. Cannon in the Rock Island Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of Illinois.

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2

Melvin Burney's sentencing is scheduled for March 31, 2006 in the U.S. District Court at Peoria. The counterfeiting offense carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000.

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